

Death and the Blossom

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Summary: She was the daughter of life. He was the lord of death.
Based on the Greek myth of Persephone.

1. Chapter 1

Note: My first Fluff Friday on tumblr! Thank you to vesperlionheart and thefreckledone for organizing it!

Prompt was "food." I did it super wrong but

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><p>Sakura sighed as she sat on her chosen boulder, letting a forest nymph thread her pink hair with blossoms that should have been impossible to find this time of year, considering that winter had barely ended. Her mother walked barefoot through the empty field, the snow melting away at her very touch, green shoots and buds bursting in her wake.<p>

Inari hummed softly as she spread seed from her basket. The golden grains melted into the soil, feeding it so that it would be ready for planting. Inari glanced over sun-kissed shoulder at Sakura. "Dear, would you like to give it a try?"

"Maybe later, mama," Sakura replied, leaning back to stare at the clouds floating through the blue sky. Despite the cold of early spring, both of them wore thin yukatas. The cloth was stronger than any material a human could find—summer winds and starlight woven together and cut into cloth for a goddess and her daughter.

Inari shook her head, her brow wrinkling with worry before returning to her work. Sakura closed her eyes, wishing her friend Ino, a flower spirit, would come visit so that they could gossip or something. Except it seemed that all of her friends were avoiding her now, ever

since her mother decided it was time to teach Sakura how to be a 'proper' goddess.

That made Sakura snort. How could she ever compare to her beautiful, perfect mother, who had been goddess (occasionally a god) of the harvest for at least five millenia before Sakura was even born? Mortals sang praises of the beloved Inari, dedicating festivals every year as they prayed for her favor. Among the heavenly pantheon, Inari was also the only one who patiently spent her time teaching humans who called for her aid the proper techniques that could increase their harvest.

But Sakura wasn't sweet or kind like her mother. There was a spark of something else entirely within her, she just didn't know _what_ it was yet.

Rumbling beneath the surface, as loud as the roll of thunder during a storm, startled her out of her drowsy boredom. The very sun seemed to blot out, plunging day into night. An enormous chasm split open before her. At first, there was only empty darkness before her, but soon the mists of the Underworld emerged like arms reaching for her. A glint of red sparked in the black. Then, the lord of death's entire form suddenly materialized at once, bursting forth from the rift astride a black stallion whose horrible screech bled into the air.

Sakura was transfixed by the sight of the elusive god, who hated being seen even by his fellow immortals. A gray cloth covered the lower half of his face, forcing her gaze to his eyes. A slow heat began in her belly the longer she staredâ€"she could not look awayâ€"it fed a blaze that threatened to consume her whole. Vaguely, she heard Inari howl, "Don't you dare!"

What did her mother mean?

She soon came to understand as he offered his hand. Solid black ink was permanently tattooed to his fingers and knuckles before breaking into intricate patterns that ran down his arm into the sleeve of his robe where Sakura couldn't see, but was highly interested in exploring.

"Come with me," he said. His voice was deep. Rich and intense like freshly tilled earth that spent years sleeping below the surface.

Her breath caught in her throat. She lightly placed her hand into his palm, not yet fully taking it. If she snatched it back now, she could do it, and she had a feeling he would not seize her if she tried. Hesitation made her look back at her mother. Inari ran towards them, her hair flying in wild waves behind her. Yet, no matter how much she tried, an enchantment kept her from ever approaching, running forever, but getting further away.

"Aren't you bored?" the god of death asked, tilting his head, the silver strands of hair shifting. The stallion stamped impatiently, flaring his nostrils.

"Hell yes, I am." She seized his hand. This was the chance she'd been waiting for. Her escape.

His skin was surprisingly warm for an immortal who ruled over the deceased. He smiled, eyes crinkling. One black. One red, a scar cut vertically down the center of the lid. There was great power in the fingers that grasped hers as he helped her onto the back of the stallion.

She wrapped her arms around his waist. The steady beat of his heart thudded through his frame. She caught one last glimpse of her mother before he urged the beast back into the chasm. The wound in the earth closed over their heads, sealing them away from the sky and they fell deep, deep into the abyss.

#

She adored the Underworld.

Boat rides on the lake of doomed souls. (The melodramatic names tickled her.) Hours spent in his enormous library of books that had literature from empires that had risen and fallen before she was even born. Horse races with the ghosts of heroic legends.

However, she did not eat, for as everyone knew, once you ate the food of the dead, you belonged in the Underworld forever. He did not force her nor did he offer her anything to tempt her. Although she wished to stay and did so of her free will, that final choice was just thatâ€”final.

She was happy here. Happier than she'd ever been, walking on the surface. Then one day, she heard the wails, and not just the usual ones of the regretful dead. No, these were of the living. They suffered. The earth would not grow. Although spring was supposed to have come months ago, the world continued in freezing winter. Many who died from starvation came to the Underworld, begging their new lord to return Inari's daughter to the surface.

The god of death sat in his throne, rapping his knuckles against the polished black armrest. His brow furrowed together. Sakura sat in the throne next to him, looking up from her book. She'd been trying to read the same page for the last hour now.

"Perhapsâ€¦you should return." He stopped his hand, tightening his fist. The black ink around his knuckles faded gray as the ichor fled his veins.

"No."

"There is a limit to how selfish we can be," he said, his voice tired.

"My mother is the one being selfish. I made my decision."

"Sakura."

"Lord Death." That was what she called him, for no one called Death by his true name.

"Minato is coming to fetch you this afternoon." Death turned his head so he would not have to face her.

Sakura paled. How had her mother convinced the King of the Gods to an errand like this? "I'll hide."

"No. You cannot hide. This is for the best" please." He reached over, cradling her cheek. His eyes searched her. She did the same, no longer intimidated by the mismatched pair. Finally, he said, "If only things were simpler. If only I was just a man who could simply love you."

"Do you love me?" she asked, her voice faint with the hope fluttering within her chest.

"Why else would I steal you, risking the wrath of nature and heaven?"

She smiled. "You did not steal me. I stole you."

He leaned over, pressing a kiss for the first time on her lips. She felt the soft give of his mouth beneath the cloth and wished there was nothing between them. It ended too quickly. Although time did not matter to immortals, the two found themselves with the novel experience of not having enough.

"Give me something to eat, then I can stay forever," she begged.

He went silent. His expression broke her heart.

He would not do as she asked.

Heavy footsteps upon marble interrupted them as Minato appeared out of a gateway cut into empty space. The god of the sun rubbed the back of his neck apologetically. "I've come to collect you and return you to your mother, Sakura."

She touched her lips, which still tingled from the kiss. Death would not look at her.

"M-may I take a few mementos?" she asked, wiping away a few errant tears with a shaky hand. She was delaying the inevitable, but perhaps she could think of something.

"Of course," Minato answered.

Sakura fled the throne room, going down the hallway alone to the library. It was her favorite place and she would miss it dearly. She slid open the shoji door, revealing the endless chamber within. The sweet smell of paper and ink filled her nose as she stepped inside. The forest of shelves with books stacked in neat rows surrounded her, allowing her to pretend they hid her from the reality she would have to face. She lingered among them, reading the titles on the spines, her mouth moving silently as she formed the letters. If only there was a spell or some magic written somewhere which could grant her wish.

A long table divided the aisleway between the shelves. As she moved past it to get to a different section, she noticed an unexplained plate of cherries on display. She picked one up by the stem, watching the candlelight gleam on the fruit's dark, luscious skin. Her breath left her lungs. This was the solution.

She ate the berries, six in all, hiding the pits from each one in her sleeve before returning to the throne room. She pretended to be shy, holding out the book for Death to see. "May I keep this one?"

"Paradise," he read the title aloud. "Yes, of course."

"Thank you."

Sakura nodded to Minato who once more opened a gateway that would transport them to the surface where her mother was waiting for them. She squeezed her eyes shut and stepped forward.

And she was denied.

"Sakura," Minato said with a tone of alarm. "Did you eat the food of the dead?"

"Yes, I did." She tried not to sound too smug.

"Death, unbind her. She is the daughter of life"she is not meant to belong to you," Minato said.

Death remained on his throne, head resting against his fist. His eyes narrowed at Sakura, as if he knew exactly what she'd done, but he said, "The rules of the Underworld cannot be broken, even for an immortal."

"Winter will not end if Inari does not have her daughter."

"The rules cannot be broken, but can they be bent?" Sakura asked.

"That depends on the bargain." Death stood, crossing the floor to reach her. He loomed over her, expression unchanging, every inch the lord of the dead.

"I ate six cherries. Six months I will be yours. The other half of the year I will be on the surface."

"And why should I let you go, when I could keep you here? You know it is my right." He raised her chin, peering into her eyes.

"I said I would be yours. Completely." And he would be hers, completely, she added silently. "I would marry you."

He stilled. "I have no need of an unwilling wife."

"I'm willing."

"Prove it."

She huffed in irritation, wondering what game he wanted to play when only moments ago he'd declared his love for her. She felt like scoffing, although refrained from doing so in Minato's presence. There was only one person who could 'mysteriously' make the plate of cherries appear out of no where.

So he wanted to be difficult? Fine. Before he could react, she slid the cloth from his face and kissed him. Her mind registered the

briefest glimpse she caught of his features._ Oh_. He was more handsome than she expected.

Though she'd never done this before, she curiously ran the tip of her tongue along his lips. A growl emanated from deep in his throat as his arms encircled her waist, crushing her close to his body. She lost coherent thought, forgetting where she was, who she was, only knowing the sensation of him.

He moved his attention on her throat, leaving bruising love bites on the pale skin. She panted, trembling, barely able to stand. They should have done this as soon as she got here!

Minato cleared his throat. "So. Are you two done working out that deal?"

Death nuzzled her hair, breathing in her scent. He chuckled darkly, whispering something into her ear that made her flush a deep shade of red.

"Y-yes, I think we have," she said, her voice thin and high. She disentangled herself from him and he let her go after tightening his grip for a fleeting second.

"Inari is not going to be happy about this," Minato muttered.

He was right, of course. Yet, as Inari ranted about the audacity of Death in kidnapping her daughter, all Sakura could think about was his final words before she left.

"_My true name is Kakashi. I want you to say it when you're in our bed."_

Notes:

- This was not as fluffy as intended and I wrote about a literal incarnation of death. I am sorry.

2. Chapter 2

Prompt: "Spoiled"

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><p>From what Sakura observed among mortals, when a woman was betrothed it was a joyous occasion and wedding plans were enacted immediately by both families to join the couple. Sometimes, there were successive smaller parties held until it culminated with an enormous party at the end. In short, betrothal was a cause for celebration. Thus, it was unusual for the couple to be forcibly separated immediately after the betrothal was made for a period of six months.<p>

A month since Sakura left the Underworld, she had not heard from the lord of death once. She scowled at the sunrise. Gold painted the line of the horizon, fading into rosy hues. She sat, hunched over, surrounded by wildflowers blooming in riotous colors. How dare it be so beautiful when she felt like her insides had crumbled to dust and scattered in the wind.

When she had said she would be spending six months on the surface, she hadn't expected that he wouldn't visit her. At the very least, she thought they would exchange messages. Her stomach dropped as she considered spending the next six months without seeing him at all. She drew her knees into her chest. Perhaps she was being naïve. It was quite possible that he didn't need to see her as much as she needed to see him.

Inari flew down, sitting next to her daughter. "Sakura, are you still moping? There's someone I'd like you to meet."

"I don't need anymore suitors. I have a betrothed."

"Oh, he's not a suitor. Just a nice young demi-god I thought you'd enjoy talking to." "Naruto, you can come out now."

A young man with messy blond hair stepped out from behind a tree. "Uh, hello."

"Hello," Sakura responded, her voice flat.

"I'll leave you two to get to know each other," Inari said. She stood, disappearing in a whirl of leaves, one of which smacked Sakura squarely in the face.

Sakura sputtered, peeling the leaf off. She glanced at the young man, who still stood there, uncertain of what to do with him. "You can go home if you like. I'm sure my mother pressured you into coming here."

"No, no. I asked to have a chance to meet you." Naruto blushed. "I actually thought I was too late, since I heard you were betrothed now."

"I am." Not that it seemed to matter to the other party.

"Oh. Well, all right. Should I leave?"

Sakura crossed her arms, her lips thinning. Her enhanced immortal senses told her it was only them and various woodland creatures around, but she was certain Death had his own ways to keep an eye on the world of the living. She set her jaw. "No, stay."

Naruto sat down next to her. "So, what do you like to do?"

"Reading. Hanging out with dead people. You?"

"Uh...okay. Mostly, I like going on adventures. You know, completing tasks set by the gods."

"Wait, is talking with me a task set by my mother?" She narrowed her eyes.

"Nooooo...yes..no. Maybe." He leaned away.

She sighed. So now flirting with her would help get some wannabe heroes their godhood or fame? Not that it mattered for what she was about to do. She batted her eyes, smiling. "Tell me about your adventures."

He visibly relaxed, launching into tales Sakura was sure contained their fair share of embellishment. She made appropriate noises of being impressed, pursing her lips, slanting her body towards him.

"Did anyone ever tell you how pretty you are?" Naruto asked, his ears turning red.

"Aw, you're so sweet." Sakura felt a little bad. He didn't seem as pompous as the other so-called suitors had been. But if this didn't get Death's attention, then she didn't know what would. She traced the collar of Naruto's robes, talking in a low tone so that only he could hear, "Maybe next time you can take me on an adventure too."

His eyelids lowered, watching her lips with interest. "We could do that."

She pushed him onto his back, hovering over him. Just as she lowered her face to his, the ground rumbled, throwing them apart. She rolled through the wildflowers, mowing them down, stopping at Death's boots.

"Good morning," he said, inclining his head.

She glared up at him. "Is it? No horse this time?"

"He likes to sleep in."

"Nice to finally hear from you." She sat up, dusting off her clothes. "Been busy?"

"Well, I watch over the transfer of mortal souls from the land of the living and exact judgment over them. It takes up a lot of my time."

"Don't let me keep you," she snapped. She went over to Naruto, who was still on the ground, his face pale as he stared at the lord of death.

"Am I going to die? That's not what the Oracle said when I was bornâ€"I don't want to die yet," Naruto said.

"I can take you anytime I want. That damned fool of an Oracle doesn't control my actions," Death corrected.

"Stop scaring him!" Sakura admonished. She urged Naruto to his feet.

"Where are you planning to go with him?" Death stalked after her. "Have you forgotten your agreement?"

"I have not forgotten. Six months I am yours, but six months I am here. It seems you are the one who's forgotten _me_."

"You're acting like a spoiled child. Youâ€" Death pointed at her companion. "â€"leave us now and I will allow you to live a few moments longer."

"Is he your betrothed? A little warning next time," Naruto muttered. He squeezed her arm, which only made Death's eyes narrow dangerously. "Do you want me to stay? He won't hurt you?"

She shook her head. "I'm sorry. You can go."

Once they were alone, silence fell over them until Death asked, "What are you doing?"

"Talking. Does eating the food of the dead preclude me from talking?" She rolled her eyes.

"Why do you have suitors? You are betrothed to _me_." Briefly, his voice thundered, echoing around them.

"Ask my mother. Perhaps she thinks you've forgotten about me."

Death picked out a yellow flower that had gotten tangled in her hair. He held it to her. "Is that what you think?"

"Haven't you?"

"Of course not. I feel your absence like I've lost a part of my own soul."

"Then why have you been ignoring me?"

"Your mother made it clear to me that if we were going to have this 'arrangement,' then I was not to intrude, at all, on her time. I wished to keep things amicable—I've spend centuries feuding with other gods before and it's not pleasant." He gestured to the red eye. "That's how I got this."

"So it's not because you've changed your mind?" She took the flower at last, rolling the stem between her fingers.

"Never." His lips skimmed her forehead.

She stepped into his embrace, rising up on her toes for a kiss. He obliged her, tugging down the cloth covering his face.

It was chaste. Barely a peck.

Not good enough. She frowned, grabbing the the collar of his robes, demanding more in the second kiss. Their mouths met with almost bruising force. She needed to be reminded of his hunger for her, that she wasn't the only one tormented by desire. She was pleased when a moan escaped from him.

His hands traced the lines from her waist down to her hips, bunching up the cloth over them. She pressed her breasts urgently against him, yearning to relieve some of heat building in her. His erection was hard and heavy on her stomach. She wanted to feel its weight in her hand.

Suddenly, her back flattened against the trunk of a tree and she realized they'd been moving without her notice. He hooked a hand under her thigh and brought up her leg, anchoring it around his hips. This bared the lower half of her body to the open air. A shiver ran through her as she felt the cloth of his robes rub the sensitive skin

of her entrance. Her heart beat faster than ever. For a moment, she believed it might burst.

Then, he dipped two fingers into her, testing her, his thumb rolling over her clitoris. She cried out, the strength holding her up giving out briefly. Gently, he helped her to the ground, her back still propped up by the tree. He murmured into her ear his love for her and all manner of filthy things that he intended to do once she was home. The very sound of his voice, rough with lust, drove her to new heights of pleasure. He coaxed her to a climax with just one hand. At her peak, she opened her eyes, locking with his, not breaking even as her moans made the branches above them rustle.

She jerked with tiny, involuntary tremors, unable to stop as the last of the delicious sensations faded. He withdrew his fingers, taking the sight of her in, jaw tightening as he held on to his control. Her chest rose and fell rapidly with her breath. Her entire body felt flushed. One breast had slipped out of the folds of her robes, the cooler air tightening the pink nipple. She was too drained to close her legs, her intimate parts still exposed to him. She didn't care. She enjoyed his admiration almost as much as his touch.

"I would obliterate from existence anyone who saw you like this," he said, fully serious about the threat. He raised his fingers to taste her essence.

Her gaze lowered to the prominent erection tenting the front of his robes. He understood her silent meaning, but chuckled. "Not like this."

"I don't think I can wait any longerâ€" "

He silenced her with a kiss. Sweet, but short. "I want our first time to be nice, long memory."

"We'll see if you last." She sat up, straightening her clothes. He seemed disappointed by her return to a modest state.

"I will visit you next month."

"You better."

Note: Written for Smut Monday over on tumblr, organized by beyondthemoor. Couldn't resist continuing this AU as I procrastinate studying for finals. Please review! ty

End
file.